

Bee City USA - Raleigh

Report on 2023

Pollinator Habitat Creation & Enhancement

Please describe pollinator habitat creation or enhancement projects in your community in 2023, and whether your committee hosted them or not.

The City of Raleigh continues to expand its efforts in habitat creation and enhancements. In 2023, the City continued its Dix Park Sunflower installation. This five acre sunflower field has been planted each year since 2018. It is one of the City's largest single pollinator habitats and the largest one open to the public (other plantings are done each year by Raleigh Water on its farm property, but these are not open to the public). Raleigh now has over 30 registered Monarch Waystation sites at City facilities and parks, with more being added all the time. Our Parks Maintenance staff now plants over 4 acres of wildflowers along Raleigh's over 100 miles of greenway trails each year. Parks now maintain an inventory of 88 pollinator sites across our system of parks, nature preserves and greenway trails. Finally, our Urban Forestry team began implementing the Street Tree Equity Project in 2023. This project will plant over 1000 street trees in an 800-acre area in Southeast Raleigh. This neighborhood is one of the lowest lying areas of the watershed, is in an identified urban heat island, and has lower street tree density than any other area of the City. This initiative is engaging residents in tree choice, greening our urban streets and offering pollinator friendly trees to provide more habitat and corridors for pollinating species. Parks continues to enhance habitat by planting wildflower plots and conducting pollinator best management practices, such as leaving the leaves and plant cut back timing. We are developing a Horticultural Guidance document to use internally to guide parks maintenance towards pollinator friendly practices. Each year Parks greenhouses produce thousands of milkweed plants along with other pollinator friendly native plants to further enhance these habitats.

How many habitat projects did you help to create or enhance in 2023?

50

How many people (staff, volunteers, students, partners, etc.) helped with those projects?

500

How many projects benefit monarchs, milkweed, or nectar plantings?

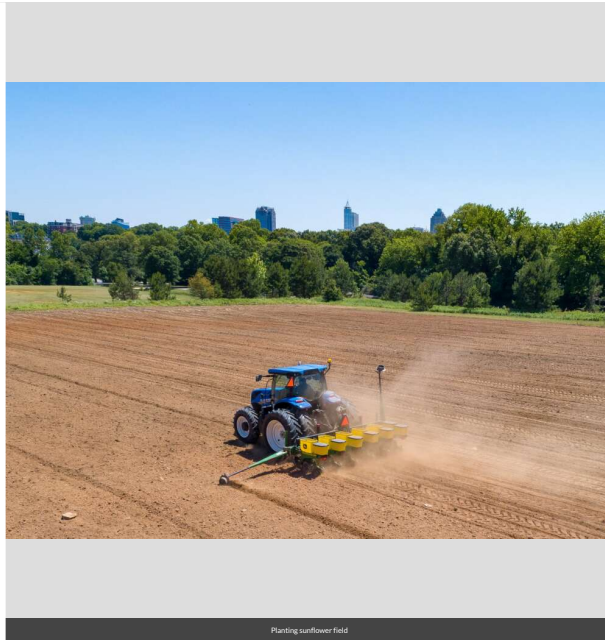
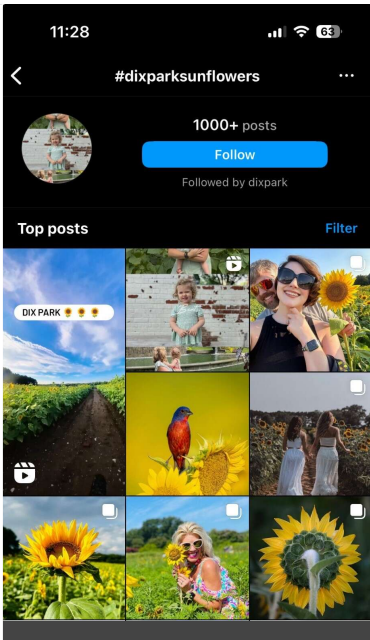
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How many total square feet of habitat were created or enhanced?

2613600

Please check all that describe the habitats your affiliate helped to create or enhance in 2023 with pollinator benefit in mind.

- Flower garden
- Vegetable garden
- Orchard
- Natural area with tree snags and stumps, and bare areas for ground nesting species
- Meadow
- Pollinator-friendly lawn (with flowering clover, dandelions...)
- Native milkweed planting for monarchs and bees (where appropriate)
- Invasive/exotic plant species removal for habitat improvement
- Native pollinator-friendly tree planting
- Rain garden/bioswale
- Roadside/rights of way planting



Education & Outreach

Please describe pollinator conservation events or outreach activities in your community in 2023, indicating whether your committee hosted them or not.

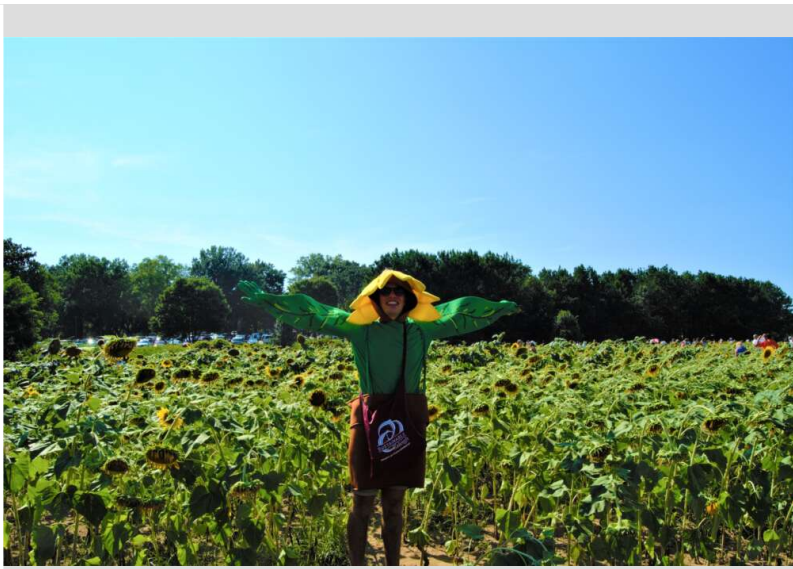
The City of Raleigh hosted a number of Pollinator events in 2023. Our second annual Earth Day celebration was held in Dorothea Dix Park in April, drawing over 1,000 attendees. Our City of Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources staff had tables and shared information on Natural Resource management, horticulture, the Capital Area Greenway System, smart irrigation, electric maintenance equipment, and Urban Forestry. The Dorothea Dix Park Sunflower planting is a huge draw across our Region. Every year, the City plants five acres of sunflowers in a public space. Community members have access to the field and there is intense interest in the flowers and the unique fauna they attract. The site draws over 100,000 visitors each year and #dixparksunflowers on Instagram has thousands of photos captured in the field each year. The City includes educational signage throughout the sunflower field on the types of pollinator species, and the blooms receive high media coverage each year. During Pollinator week, Raleigh promotes educational opportunities and events on its website in collaboration with community partners and City departments. In 2022, our Pollinator week video was one of the most watched videos on Raleigh's YouTube channel and it was reprised in 2023 to share evergreen content with new audiences. In addition, we provide social media blasts during Pollinator Week highlighting the efforts Parks Maintenance and Natural Resources division are doing to protect pollinators. We also hosted Monarch Gardening workshops during pollinator week. Our Parks staff are highly engaged in continuing opportunities for learning and partnership. In 2023, they participated in the NC Invasive Plants Council Symposium, tours of Pollinator Paradise in Chatham County, and Beyond the Backyard: Native Planting for Public Landscapes. They also presented gardening for pollinator workshops to the Oakwood Garden Club, Riverhawks Riverkeepers, and at the NC Great Tree Conference. The City of Raleigh also convened the second annual meeting of the Wake County Swarm—a community of Bee City and Bee Campus affiliates and pollinator organizations in Wake County, NC. The group came together to discuss 2023 activities and to plan collaborations for 2024. From this meeting, a Google group has been established to carry forward communication and the group plans to collaborate on the education and outreach in 2024 around reducing insect spraying in neighborhoods throughout the county. The City's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department is taking the lead on this work, compiling demonstration kits using Mosquito Dunks to share property-level integrated pest management practices at events and City facilities throughout the year. These demonstration kits will also be shared with our community partners to expand outreach opportunities.

How many pollinator-related events or outreach activities did you host or help with in 2023 (in total)?

20

How many Bee City USA logo street signs have you installed to date (in total)?

2



City Staff engaging residents on Dix Park sunflower planting



Volunteers doing invasive species removal

Policies & Practices

Please describe actions taken to make pest management more pollinator-friendly.

Parks continues to implement an IPM policy and Departmental Operating Instruction on all of its 10,000 acres of parks property and greenway trail. This policy regulates the chemicals that can be applied and their location. This policy prioritizes cultural practices over chemical and requires strict qualifications for our Public Pesticide Operators. In addition, we have added pollinator protection to the policy, including an appendix that identifies which chemicals are toxic to bees. Parks has developed a horticultural guidance document that defines how parks are maintained to better protect pollinators and other invertebrates, while enhancing park aesthetics and user experiences. Are efforts underway in your community to further reduce pesticide use in residential or business areas? This may include neighborhood-led efforts, outreach to landscapers, etc. If so, please describe. In late 2023, the Wake County Swarm members convened and discussed collaboration on initiatives to reduce pesticide spraying. The group researched and is planning education and engagement opportunities for 2024 to promote the use of Mosquito Dunks in residential areas. The Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department has applied for funding through Raleigh's Climate Action funds to support a one year education and outreach program, including providing mosquito dunk kids to neighbors through parks and community centers, collaboration with the Housing and Neighborhoods Department, and planned engagements at City events.

Did your committee participate in any continuing education on ecologically-based Integrated Pest Management planning?

Yes. Our maintenance staff attended a tour of the Pollinator Paradise in Chatham County, Parking lot prairie tour of Durham, Green Stormwater Infrastructure maintenance workshop, and a stream bank restoration workshop all

focused on enhancing existing habitats.

Please check actions you have taken to make pest management practices more pollinator-friendly.

- Implemented or maintained a written IPM plan
- Only use pesticides as a last resort within the IPM plan
- Avoided use of pesticides in public sites containing designated pollinator habitat or other sensitive features (except when targeted use is deemed the best option for invasive or noxious weed, insect or disease management)
- Implemented non-chemical pest prevention and management methods on city or campus grounds

Are efforts underway in your community to further reduce pesticide use in residential or business areas? This may include neighborhood-led efforts, outreach to landscapers, etc. If so, please describe.

In late 2023, City Council requested staff to research a suite of City-wide habitat enhancement interventions. These include research into the Green Growth Toolkit by the Fish and Wildlife Resources Commission, a prohibition on the use of invasive plants in all City projects, development of a Horticultural Guidance Document to better protect invertebrates through parks maintenance practices, and an exploration into the development of a branded Pollinator Protection program that could be implemented on public and private land.

Any lessons learned you would like to share?

The City of Raleigh has received tremendous support from its community partners. Convening groups through the Wake County Swarm have helped the City identify opportunities to engage with those groups and their constituencies and collaborate on shared issues of concern. Even casual conversations with these groups over the course of the year have helped strengthen trust and transparency in our pollinator protection community. Parks maintenance standards can define how certain parks, or areas of parks are treated, to provide better habitat, while balancing the need for aesthetically pleasing grounds and user interactions.



Raleigh Environmental Advisory Board at the 2023 Earth Day Celebration

Learn More

Integrated Pest Management Plan: [3-13-23_Pesticide Management Policy-combined.pdf](#)

Recommended Native Plant List:

Recommended Native Plant Supplier List: